

The attached document is an excerpt from Volume I of CIA's Official History of the Bay of Pigs, written by Agency historian Jack Pfeiffer.

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Eddy Ferrer also touched on another of the tragic stories of air operations on 17 April 1961. Crispin Garcia and his navigator, Juan M. Gonzalez, had been scheduled to join another B-26 for one of the last missions over Blue Beach on 17 April. When the second aircraft had to abort very shortly after take off because of mechanical difficulties, Garcia and Gonzalez continued alone. In maintaining the patrol of the beach area, by himself, Garcia ran low on fuel. Rather than return to Nicaragua, he put down at Boca Chica Naval Air Station (NAS) in Key West for refueling prior to returning to JMTIDE, and he was scheduled to leave the Florida base at 1740 hours Florida time -- 1640 hours Nicaragua time. 6/

He had flown into Boca Chica with aircraft #940, but for whatever reason, when Garcia was ready to depart Boca Chica, he took off in B-26 #933, which

he took the priest aboard on a combat mission. Moreover, the available records do not support Ferrer's claim that he -- or any of the other transport pilots -- flew a second mission on the 17th. The records do show that Ferrer was scheduled to land supplies at Playa Giron on Tuesday, 18 April, but that he was forced to abort because of the presence of Castro's fighters. 5a/

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~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

had put down in Boca Chica on 15 April following the D-2 strike at Campo Libertad. Apparently there were more problems with Garcia's aircraft than he realized at the time that he put down. The fact of the switch in aircraft was confirmed by a cable to Headquarters from JMWAVE which noted that aircraft #933 had departed on 18 April 1961 at 0248Z for TIDE. On 19 April at 0433Z, in an OPIM cable, TIDE advised Headquarters that B-26 #933 had not arrived, and asked for the location of the aircraft and the pilot, Garcia. At 1032Z on 19 April, TIDE went to Headquarters again, specifying that #933 had not arrived and recommended a check with Boca Chica to determine if it had actually departed. TIDE requested full details if the plane was still missing.

On 21 April, at 0031Z, TIDE again went to Bell requesting information about the aircraft and the crew, and came up with the interesting suggestion that if Garcia and his navigator had re-defected, they were in possession of an aircraft which could approach TIDE with no trouble at all, and do serious damage. The follow up from Headquarters indicated that the whereabouts of the aircraft and the pilot

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

were not known, but that there had been no indication (apparently in COMINT) of a re-defection; and Headquarters noted that traces would be made. The case apparently was dropped at this point insofar as the Bay of Pigs operation was concerned. However, on 2 November 1961, [REDACTED] cabled Headquarters:

Armed B-26 with Cuban markings number FAR 933 found deep in jungles Jinotega Department, few miles from Bocay River. Remains of two men in aircraft.

[REDACTED] said that he was about to depart for the crash site with General Somoza and if it turned out that the aircraft was in fact a Castro aircraft, Somoza was considering laying the case before the OAS. If not a Castro aircraft, [REDACTED] wanted instructions regarding disposition of the remains. At this point Security Officer [REDACTED] and another Agency employee were sent to Nicaragua to become involved in establishing the identity of the bodies.*

* JMWAVE which had been requested to provide the identities of the crew which flew aircraft 933 out of Boca Chica was unable to penetrate the alias identification under which the mission crews had operated.

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The additional cable traffic which followed concerned the status of the deceased vis a vis both the Government of Nicaragua (GON) and also the families. The GON, represented by General Somoza, preferred that the bodies quietly be buried in Nicaragua and nothing more to be said of the matter. In discussions with Jose Miro Cardona, he also indicated that his preference was for a quiet burial, inasmuch as the Cuban families probably had already given up on the possibility of their family members still being alive, and that if it were revealed that the bodies had been found in the crash, he could foresee all kinds of difficulties, including resurrection of discussions of the April invasion.

The following paragraphs taken from an 8 November cable, after [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had visited the crash site indicates what had happened to Garcia and Gonzales:

Plane apparently crashed approximately midnight 17 or 18 April 61. Directional gyro indicated impact possibly on heading 155. Plane hit side of 1,000 foot steep incline in almost impenetrably dense jungle. From almost totally demolished condition, estimate A/C in high speed dive. Wreckage strewn over path about 200 yards down 45 degree incline on heading 210. From position of fuel selector, possibly on

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

one engine. Added to crash damage, locals have scavenged many pieces of airframe and equipment. To complete destruction, party obliterated few remaining identifiable markings and insignia.

Of crew, found only three shoes, parts of parachutes, and one sheath knife scabbard, bearing bugle tooled in leather. Local who buried remains, states bodies headless, limbless, barely recognizable as human remains. No clothing or identity papers except few items investigating party will return to Headquarters. Remains are buried at crash site. Deterioration, animals, and insects have all contributed to total destruction any identifiable remnants. Have arranged through local liaison have Catholic missionary in area hold appropriate religious rites.

Have photographed entire crash site. Will hand carry film on return. Unless otherwise directed, plan leave 8 November via PAA flight 506.*

* Trying to establish the identity of the second man in the cockpit with Capt. Crispin Garcia proved to be something of a task. The Mission Review Summary prepared by Gar Thorsrud identified the second man as "Nabel" -- a name which did not appear on any of the membership rolls of the Cuban Brigade, or among the lists of air trainees, pilots, or navigators; nor were any of the heirs to those killed in the course of Project JMATE identified with anyone named Nabel. Similarly, the cable traffic concerning this episode, failed to make any mention of the name of the co-pilot with Crispin Garcia. By processes of elimination of those killed in action against Air Force Registers for the Brigade, pilots and crewmen, it was established that the second man in the cockpit was Juan M. Gonzalez; and this was subsequently confirmed by Eduardo Ferrer's book, *Operacion Puma*. References for this episode are listed in Source 7.

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